



# God Is Good News

ADVENT / CHRISTMAS

NOV. 2018 TO FEB. 2019

## *Good Stewards & Generous Hearts*

*This Christmas tree displays the Social Action ministries supported by the St. Matthias community year 'round.*

*Our newest ministry, "Find a Need and Fill It," made mats for the homeless. (See pages 4 and 5.)*

*We also recently collected \$6,000 for Metanoia to provide at least six nights of shelter on below-freezing nights.*

*Our annual Giving Tree will be set up in the Gathering Area by Thanksgiving with tags much like these ornaments.*

*Bring your unwrapped gifts by December 9.*



## *Disciple's Prayer*

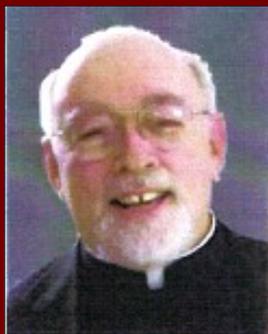
*Cord, help me to be Your disciple  
And always do your will. To  
put Your desires before my own,  
Your work to faithfully fulfill.  
Help me set a good example  
For those who look to me to see  
in my daily living what a Chris-  
tian's life should be. Those who  
are new in the faith, help me  
guide and teach. And those  
who are outside Your fold,  
somehow help me reach. Cord,  
I want to be Your servant and  
in everything I do, when  
others might look  
at me, I pray that  
they see You.*

*Wishing You and  
All Our  
St. Matthias Family*



*a Holy Christmas  
and a Blessed  
New Year!*

**PadRay  
Ponders**



**Discipleship**

**Through our  
Baptism  
we are ALL  
called to be  
disciples of  
Jesus Christ.**

# Discipleship ~ our duty, our privilege

Dear Disciples,

Jesus commissions us to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19–20)

Sometimes called “The Great Commission,” this passage from Scripture is a reminder that through our Baptism we are ALL called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. This is not just a “nice idea” or a good “suggestion.” This is a **COMMAND!**

Oh, we can refuse the command, we can reject the call of our baptism, and unfortunately many do. But for those of us who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, we have no choice. It’s our vocation. It’s our duty. It’s our privilege.

In June of 2020, St. Matthias Parish will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Forty years of making disciples in this little corner of Parma and environs. In anticipation of this milestone, our Parish Council is preparing a year of events during 2019 leading up to our anniversary and focusing on how we can be better disciples. (See calendar below.) I invite you to participate as much as you can in these events and find your own possible ways of living the life of a disciple.

In God’s loving mercy,

## 2019 Year of Discipleship Events

### January

Disciple’s Prayer will be said at every Mass and pocket prayer cards will be distributed. You’ll also find it in the *Gather* books.

### February

*Everybody Needs to Forgive Somebody* book discussion. Sessions will be held on Wednesdays at 9 a.m. & 1 p.m. beginning February 6 through February 27 and Thursdays at 7 p.m. beginning February 7 through February 28.

### March 6-April 21 Lent

“Pay It Forward” Movie Night on March 8, pizza at 6 p.m. movie starts at 7 p.m. Pay it forward coupons will be distributed and parishioners are encouraged to use them throughout Lent.

### April 24-June 26

Acts of the Apostles Bible Study Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. April 24 through June 26. Adoration every Friday 4 p.m.-midnight.

### June 29

Car Wash & Prayer 8 a.m.-noon.

### July

Evangelize while on vacation. Parishioners will be asked to send a paragraph about how they evangelized or witnessed someone else evangelizing while on vacation. Paragraphs may be used in the newsletter, bulletin and/or on the St. Matthias Facebook page.

### August 15

Feast of the Assumption.  
Ice Cream Social after 7 p.m. Mass.

### September

On Catechetical Sunday, celebrated at Masses on September 14 & 15, a blessing will be bestowed on all who have helped to form another’s faith.

### October

A “Tree of Life” mural will be in the Gathering Area with a basket of leaves to be filled with examples of life which will be put on the tree.

### November

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Friday, November 8.

### December

Giving Tree, adopt a family, and other activities.

# Sgt. Chalupa and NCO Dominick make us proud

By Rita Dowd-Mikolajczyk

**Patrick Chalupa**, son of parishioners Dennis and Karen Chalupa, was honorably discharged this summer as a sergeant in the Marine Corps. A graduate of Brecksville/Broadview Heights High School, Patrick attended the University of Akron for a short time before enlisting in 2014. According to his father, Patrick made “the jump on his own to the Marines and only the Marines.” He did his basic training at Paris Island and was stationed at Beaufort Air Station in South Carolina where he trained as an Engineer Equipment Electrical Systems Technician.



Marine Sgt. Patrick Chalupa

Although they supported his initial choice to join the Marines, his parents had the usual “apprehension about what he would get into” and how the experience would “change his heart.” But these concerns were somewhat allayed when he was later deployed to Norway and Uganda on humanitarian projects. These assignments offered him a much larger world view.

Patrick plans to attend college in the spring to study nursing. His parents are proud of what he has accomplished and so proud he “came back to us with goals in mind” and “the determination to accomplish what he wants to achieve.” Patrick asked us to express his gratitude to the community of St. Matthias for their support and prayers which he feels “kept me safe throughout my journeys.”

**Christopher Dominick**, a 2006 graduate of Normandy High School, has been in the Air Force 12 years. He completed his basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, and is currently at Nellis AFB (Nevada) serving as a non-commissioned officer in charge of Electrical Systems in the Civil Engineering Squadron. Chris received an Associate’s Degree from the Community College of the Air Force in Mechanical and Electrical Technologies. He is currently earning a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science and Government at Ashford University. Stationed at three stateside bases, he has also been on six month deployments to Iraq and Qatar.

His mother Susann Grimm, sister-in-law of parishioner Nadine Grimm, acknowledges that, “The military made my son the man I hoped he would become—responsible, caring, thoughtful, respectful, reliable and a leader.” His decision to enlist was inspired by his grandfather’s service in WW2 as well as the impact of 9/11. Overall, he claims that his service has given him confidence and a sense of self-reliance. It also affects him spiritually by helping him accept the truth that many things are “out of my control” and it satisfies his desire to travel and meet people with different religions. “Learning from them can help you become more spiritual in your own way.”

Chris expressed his gratitude to the St. Mathias community for all the prayers, support and care packages he received from us. “I want them to know they touched many military members’ hearts with those, not just mine.” Because Chris believes that our community shares in his success, he wanted us to know that in May he will be stationed in Washington D.C. to work in the White House Military Office.



Susann Grimm and son NCO Christopher Dominick



Please remember those serving in military, especially the members of our parish family...

Alex Davis  
Delaney Davis  
Christopher Dominick  
Kevin Frattin  
Joshua Haugh  
David Jaklitsch  
Antonio Lonero  
Gregory Payne  
Ricky Richardson  
David Schmidt  
Sean Sirl  
Aaron Sykora

Welcome Home  
Patrick Chalupa  
Timothy Schmidt

We regularly send Care Packages to our military members. Check the weekly bulletin (you can find it online) for a list of items we’re able to send, and are needed by the troops. All donations are appreciated and can be put in the bin in the Gathering Area.

We also need bakers to bake and drop off cookies to send to the military. For details, call Karen Spirakus at (216) 524-7070.

## Homeless mats by the numbers

**30**  
mats made and donated

**750**  
plastic bags to make 1 mat  
6 ft. long x 4 ft. wide

**20**  
hours to crochet 1 mat

**35+**  
volunteer planners/crocheters

**8**  
hours to make plarn for 1 mat

**20,000+**  
plastic bags donated

# We now know what “plarn” is

By Patti Bertschler

## Let's start at the beginning.

Have you ever sat on the ground listening to an outdoor concert or looking up at the night stars and found it too cold to be comfortable? Imagine a homeless man or woman who sleeps under a bridge or in a homeless camp each night.

In researching for our third quarter “Find a Need and Fill It” project, we learned that Anne Burkett from St. Victor Church in Richfield was willing to train our parishioners to create sleeping mats for our homeless brothers and sisters in Cleveland. Anne and her friend Linda Corsi offered a training class at St. Matthias on August 23, and so began our “Keep me in the Loop” homeless mat project. Donating a plastic mat is meant to provide a little warmth and cushion between the damp cold ground and the person.



Anne Burkett teaches Bainbridge Girl Scout troop leader Dana Kachurchak to crochet.

At last count, 30 mats have been completed and more are in progress. During Thanksgiving week all the mats will be delivered to our friend Carl Cook at the St. Herman House and at The Metanoia Project to distribute there.

The “Plarn Barn” as we called it was filled to overflowing many times over.



Besides our parishioners, a large group from North Royalton Senior Center and a Girl Scout troop representative from Bainbridge showed up that night armed with scissors, rulers and size P crochet hooks to learn the process.

Prior to the class, parishioners ransacked their plastic grocery bag stashes and donated thousands of same-size, same-thickness bags to the effort. We learned that to make a mat, bags had to be flattened, cut into strips and rolled into “plarn” balls – plastic yarn.

Once plarn was made, the crocheting could begin. Women teamed up to make the plarn and then hand it off to other volunteers who would crochet mats. Crocheters made 1 to 5 mats depending on their time. A few ambitious women, who had never crocheted before, tackled the plarn and actually learned to crochet thanks to Anne and Linda’s patient teaching.



Louise Miller (left) prepares plastic bags to hand off to Marie Shibban, who looks pretty serious as she rolls plarn balls.



Our youngest volunteer learns to make plarn.

**With warm and grateful  
thanks to all ~ Truly a  
St. Matthias Family  
project**

Here's one of several mats Gloria Komar crocheted.



**This project involved  
hundreds of parishion-  
ers donating thousands  
of bags, and more than  
three dozen women who  
recycled plastic into  
cushioned mats.**



Who knew that Florence Visk was so shy as she displays her patterned mat?



Just some of the mats completed, rolled and ready to be donated to the homeless in time for Thanksgiving .

## **Plarn and Crochet Volunteers**

Marlene Beohmerle  
Mary Bowers  
Bonnie Ciulla  
Mary Ann Cremona  
Lynn Faenza  
Karen Frattin  
Gina Gazda  
Carole Golonka  
Kristen Griffiths  
Barb Heath  
Sandy Hanlan  
Debbie Jasany  
Dana Kachurchak  
Vicky Kasberg  
Gloria Komar  
Mary Ann Kupczyk  
Joan Lavery  
Helen Mikolajczki  
Louise Miller  
Pat Monachino  
Jane Nowak  
Laraine Orefice  
Sue Putnam  
Donna Ross  
Sheila Sarkisian  
Marie Shiban  
Marianne Schultz  
Carol Singer  
Bev Stepanik  
Tammy Vallo  
Helen Vinic  
Florence Visk  
Nancy Williams  
Lynn Zielaskiewicz  
Sharon Zimmer  
And Others

**Bainbridge  
Girl Scout Troop**

*Special thanks to  
every parishioner who  
donated plastic bags  
to make this project  
possible.*

## Update Membership Information

Does our Church database have YOUR family membership record correct?

Here is your chance to update YOUR record for our annual Guide Book & Directory (if you haven't already done so). It is time for us to update our database with any changes, additions or deletions that may have occurred in YOUR family over the past year.

Have you changed your phone number? Have you moved? Are you preparing to move soon? Are all of your children still at home, and are they all included in your membership record? Do you want your record published?

If you have not already informed the Church Office about changes to your record, please let us know now so that the information in the Guide Book & Directory is correct. The Church Office number is (440) 888-8220.

**Thank you for your help!**

# Celebrating 20 years of service at the Brookside Center

Parishioner Mark Straub introduced Brookside to St. Matthias in 1998 after Father Ray's homily about reaching out to the less fortunate. The diocese was encouraging suburban churches to adopt an inner city church when Mark suggested Brookside Hunger Center. St Matthias has been supporting this agency ever since.

## Who Brookside serves

Brookside serves about 1,300 individuals monthly—approximately 400 children, 650 adults, and 450 over age 60. Additionally, they serve 75 home-bound clients. Among all these, 149 are new clients from Puerto Rico who relocated to Cleveland following Hurricane Maria last year.

## Our Tuesday Tech

Sylvia Woycitzky who does data entry at Brookside says, "I'm grateful I can do it. When you give, you get." She reminds us that besides canned goods, cat food is also welcome for those clients who have pets.

## New address

This fall Brookside is due to move to a new location at 3764 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street in Cleveland. The larger space offers an opportunity to widen services in the Archwood, Brookside and Old Brooklyn neighborhoods.



*Greg Marke and his dad Paul delivering food items donated by local grocery stores to Brookside.*

## Volunteers

The journey from donor to recipient requires a dedicated and hardworking team. Art Spirakus has been shelving food products and packing them up for families who come to Brookside on Mondays for about 15 years. Jim and Rose Rohal have been volunteers even longer, picking up products like bread and bakery from Giant Eagle and Acme four days a week and driving them to St. Matthias or Brookside, along with Greg and Amy Marke each week. This group has become like a family and enjoy visiting and working with each other, sharing lunch and Karen Spirakus's desserts.

## Future

In the near future, Brookside hopes to incorporate a thrift store and expand services for those in need. St. Matthias volunteers will be right there with them. Interested in helping? Call Brookside at (216) 749-4295.

*Art Spirakus and Rose Rohal shelving donated food products and packaging them for families that come to Brookside.*





# Something for everyone in Advent

## Thanksgiving Day Mass, Thursday, November 22, 9:00 a.m.

The Thanksgiving Day Mass is not only a Mass to give thanks for all the blessings we have been given, but also a time to share with others. This year we will be collecting non-perishable items as well as monetary donations for Brookside during the offertory procession. Please bring an item to donate. After Mass, enjoy coffee, pastry and fellowship.

## Breakfast in Bethlehem Saturday, December 8

The Knights of Columbus will host Breakfast in Bethlehem on Saturday, December 8 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. with food, fun, and an appearance from St. Nicholas. All are welcome. Please RSVP so enough food is prepared by signing up in the Gathering Area or calling the rectory at (440) 888-8220.

## Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mass for this Holy Day of Obligation will be at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, December 8. This feast day is especially significant for American Catholics because it is the feast of Mary, Patroness of the United States.

## Evening of Confession

Father Ray will be available for confessions on Thursday, December 20 from 6-8:00 p.m.

## Little Blue Book for Advent and Christmas

This book of reflections is a great preparation for Christmas. Books will be in the Gathering Area for a free-will donation.

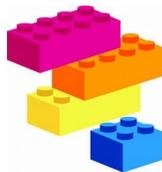
## Giving Tree

The Giving Tree will be set up in the Gathering Area in time for Thanksgiving. Tags on the tree are for Brookside, Prison Ministry, Metanoia, Military Postage, Good Samaritan and Woman-kind. Bring your unwrapped gift to the church with the tag attached and place it under the tree by Sunday, December 9.

## Cozy and creative...

# 4<sup>th</sup> quarter "Find a Need" needs you!

We've reached the end of the "Plarn" Homeless Mats project. Now we're gearing up for the last "Find a Need and Fill It" project of this year, and it focuses on two small Christmas gifts for the children at Brookside Center. This project is called "Cold Feet and Creativity." (Not a very creative title. We know.)

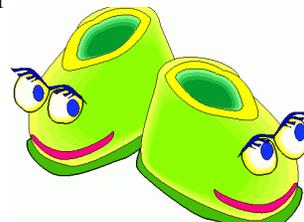


kits. Besides children who may be accustomed to cold winters, Brookside now has 37 more children who came with their families following the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Warm slippers will be a welcome gift! And almost everyone likes Legos.

Please do not wrap these gifts. Place them in the big red box in the Gathering Area by December 9.



We'd like to surprise the children up to age 17 with new house slippers and new Lego



## Liturgy Schedule

### Mass - 4th Week of Advent

Sat. Dec. 22

4:00 p.m.

Sun. Dec. 23

9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

### Mass -

Christmas

Mon. Dec. 24

4:00 p.m. &

Midnight Mass

Tue. Dec. 25

10:00 a.m.

### Mass - Feast of the Holy Family

Sat. Dec. 29

4:00 p.m.

Sun. Dec. 30

9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

### Mass - Solemnity of Mary

Mon. Dec. 31

4:00 p.m.

Tue. Jan. 1

10:00 a.m.



# Saint Matthias the Apostle Church

1200 West Sprague Road, Parma, OH 44134

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**Inside**



## Mission Statement of Saint Matthias Church

*We, the family of Saint Matthias, called to be disciples of Christ, reach out with a loving and caring spirit. Proclaiming the message of the Risen Lord, we provide for the spiritual growth and development of our community. By sharing liturgies, ministries and responsibilities, we promote God's kingdom.*

"God Is Good News" is the newsletter of Saint Matthias the Apostle Church.

Editor: Patti Bertschler

Staff: Irma Baker, Rita Dowd-Mikolajczyk, Chris Walter

## Saint Matthias Church

(440) 888-8220 - [www.stmatthiaschurch.org](http://www.stmatthiaschurch.org)

### Masses

Saturday: 4 p.m.  
Sunday: 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.  
Holy Days: 8:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 8:30 a.m.  
Wednesday: No service

### Reconciliation

Anytime by appointment or Saturday 3-3:45 p.m.

### Office Hours

Monday-Thursday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Friday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### St. Matthias Parish Staff

**Rev. Raymond A. Sutter**, D.Min. - Pastor  
**Rev. Art Snedeker** - In residence  
**Tom Litwinowicz** - Deacon  
**Ken Golonka** - Deacon Emeritus  
**Dianne Laheta** - Pastoral Minister - Catechesis  
**Ann Clark** - Director of Liturgy  
**Sig Mikolajczyk** - Music Director  
**Joe Mikolajczyk** - Cantor/Choral Director  
**Mike Starinsky** - Business Manager  
**Chris Walter** - Office Manager  
**Laura Walters** - Receptionist  
**Bob Arbuckle** - Facilities  
**Gina Gazda** - Cook/Housekeeper